

In January 2011 StudentsFirst released a “Policy Agenda” that advocates for a set of dramatic state and local policy changes in three critical areas proven to have the strongest results for students, in many cases building on the work of education reformers: teacher effectiveness, parental choice and governance/fiscal accountability. StudentsFirst works with selected states (partners on the ground, governors, interested legislators) to support policy development, bill introduction, issue campaigning and adoption of legislation. Specifically, the organization provides technical and advocacy support, deploying organizational resources in a concentrated and coordinated fashion.

Indiana Legislative Wins for Students: 2011

On April 30, 2011 Governor Mitch Daniels signed four landmark education reform bills (HB 1002, HB 1003, SB 1, and SB 575) aligned with the StudentsFirst Policy Agenda. The bills accomplish the following:



- Eliminate “Last In, First Out” (LIFO) seniority-based teacher layoffs and establishes teacher effectiveness as the primary criteria when making layoff decisions.
- Establish a statewide teacher evaluation system that includes a strong performance component;
- Reward the best teachers by enabling pay for performance and ending compensation policies based solely on longevity and attainment of degrees;
- Focus collective bargaining on wage and wage-related issues, not on evaluation and structuring of schools.
- Create an opportunity scholarship program with strict accountability provisions that gives low-income families up to \$7,500 toward the cost of tuition for participating private schools; and
- Provide a “parent trigger”, allowing parents to prompt the conversation of the lowest-performing public schools to public charter schools.

StudentsFirst provided key support at each juncture in the process from bill conception to passage.

StudentsFirst Role

StudentsFirst began working with Governor Daniels and his team in Indiana in February 2011. In March, Michelle and StudentsFirst staff spent two days in Indiana meeting with Governor Daniels and leadership from both parties in the House and Senate. On this trip, StudentsFirst engaged membership and on-the-ground partners by hosting a teacher meeting at which Michelle spoke to over 100 teachers about the proposed reforms in Indiana and attending a charter school rally at the statehouse, at which Michelle was the keynote speaker. Michelle returned to Indiana on April 13 to speak on a panel about education reform at the University of Notre Dame. Also in April, StudentsFirst members attended a lobbying day organized by Stand for Children. And at the Governor’s bill-signing ceremony, StudentsFirst members were there to witness the event and show support.

Over the course of the legislative cycle, StudentsFirst worked with the leadership in the House and Senate as well as the Governor to support the passage of reform legislation. Specifically, StudentsFirst did the following:

- **Policy Development and Consultation.** StudentsFirst worked with the governor’s staff and advised House and Senate leaders on ensuring that SB 1, the centerpiece of the reforms, included language to end LIFO.
- **Grassroots Mobilization.** StudentsFirst grew its membership in Indiana from 2,200 members in January to 4,000 members in April. These members testified at hearings; called and sent letters to their legislators; attended the Ed Reform Rocks rally at the end of March; attended an education townhall meeting with Secretary Arne Duncan and Governor Daniels; and participated in a lobbying day at the statehouse. Additionally, nearly 300 people sent emails to lawmakers through StudentsFirst’s website tool and over 7,000 sent emails to lawmakers through StudentsFirst sponsored petitions hosted by change.org and Care2.
- **Earned Media.** StudentsFirst authored an op-ed in the Indy Star newspaper.

INDIANA			
Technical Support Policy Tools & Services		Advocacy Support Political & Grassroots Engagement	
Model Policy	✓	Press Release/Endorsement	
State Specific Policy	✓	Joint Press Release	
Policy Consultation	✓	Testify	✓
Staffing Advice		State “Hub” Page	✓
		Member Activation	✓
		Live Rallies & GOTV	
		Earned Media (Local Press)	✓
Supplemental Support Resources & Funding			
Paid Media	✓	Polling	
Contribution		Field Team	
IE		Lobbyist	✓
Litigation Support			

Partners

StudentsFirst worked with several partners in Indiana, including Stand for Children, MindTrust, Democrats for Education Reform, the National Association of Public School Choice, Indiana Virtual School Families, the staff of Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School, Hoosier International Academy, Teach for America and TeachPlus.